



# APPENDIX A4

Courthouse Facility Checklist





## INTRODUCTION AND USER'S GUIDE <sup>1</sup>

One of the critical steps in preparing for the renovation or construction of a new courthouse is an assessment of the court's current facility resources. Such an evaluation is a key element in building public support for improvement of facility resources. A thorough evaluation of existing facilities should consider both the quantity and quality of space. It should address such questions as: Are there sufficient courtrooms? Are they configured properly? Do they have appropriate support spaces? Can appropriate public and private circulation and building security be achieved? Is the building environmentally effective and efficient? Does it meet modern life –safety requirements? Is it accessible to persons with physical impairments?

The checklist was designed to help court administrators, judges, other court professionals, and facility management personnel answer these questions. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the *Planning and Design Guide for Court Facilities*. The order in which each courthouse space is listed in the checklist follows the order used in the guidelines. Associated with each space are nine evaluation criteria: design and image, space allocation, environment, handicapped access, adjacency and circulation, accessibility, security, furnishings, and technical considerations. The checklist may be used to assess each space in the courthouse on these nine criteria. The choice of scale is left up to the evaluator, but the use of + for acceptable and - for not acceptable to probably sufficient.

The following definitions may be used for the nine criteria.

**Design and Image.** This relates to the appropriateness of the physical structure and environment created within the space. Consideration should be given to the overall design implications conveyed through the space, environment, and furnishings and how they enhance the decorum and dignity of the court. The design of the courthouse is the underlying theme that governs its functions. The image is how the scheme is perceived and the behavior it provokes in the people that use the courthouse. Questions that might be asked at this stage include: Does the design fit the site and setting? Does the organization of spaces and functions clearly respond to and promote the intended uses? Is there a sense of place and a reflection of the importance of the judicial process? Does the image reflect the values of the community and the judicial system?

**Space Allocation.** This covers the adequacy of the space provided for individual elements of the design. Consideration should be given to the amount of space needed to accommodate the activity, the requirements for circulation, equipment, and storage. Space requirements may be found in the guidelines under each courthouse element.

**Environment.** This refers to the adequacy of the heating, cooling, and ventilation; the lighting and acoustics; and how they affect the performance of all who use the facility.

**Handicapped Access.** Essential to the free and open access to justice are court facilities that are free of physical barriers that prohibit persons who are impaired from getting to, entering, or using the services provided in the building. Citizens and staff who are mobility impaired, physically weak, or who have a sight, hearing, manipulation, or other disability must be able to navigate freely from the parking lot, bus station, or taxi stand into the courthouse and to each public space within the building.

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<sup>1</sup> Checklist courtesy of: "The Courthouse: A Planning and Design Guide for Court Facilities, *National Center for State Courts*, 1991



**Adjacency and Circulation.** This refers to two aspects of the design. Adjacency refers to the association of space with functions to most efficiently transact business. For example, are the high-volume activities housed near the entrance? Are the jury deliberation rooms conveniently located near the courtrooms? Each space requires sufficient circulation in order for work to progress efficiently. Is there sufficient space for people to move about without interfering with the work of others?

**Accessibility.** This refers to the convenience with which court employees are able to accomplish their work and the ease with which the public can reach their destination and receive service. Consideration should be given to the adequacy of the space for circulation, the location of services relative to the entrances, the use of clearly visible and understandable signs, the presence of public information and instruction materials, and the use of public address systems.

**Security.** The design of a building can enhance or diminish its security and safety. Covered under security is the extent to which architectural solutions and the deployment and use of security devices such as magnetometers, x-ray machines, CCTV systems, and alarm buttons enhance the safety of employees, witnesses, jurors, litigants, and others who use the courthouse.

**Furnishings.** This covers the appropriateness, quality, durability, and comfort of decorations, furniture, floor and wall coverings, and accessories.

**Technical Aspects.** One of the important features of new facilities is the extent to which their operation, and the operation of offices within the building, now rely on the benefits of modern electronic technologies. From the use of computers for docketing, indexing, and calendaring of cases to the use of computer-assisted transcription to take the official record, today's courts rely heavily on new technologies. This assessment is concerned with how well such technology is integrated into the design of the facility and how well the facility design promotes the adoption of new technologies.



## COURTHOUSE FACILITY CHECKLIST

COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
<b>GENERAL TRIAL COURTROOM</b>										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Jury box										
6. Attorney tables										
7. Bailiff's station										
8. Spectator seating										
9. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Evidence display & storage										
D. Clock										
E. Storage area										

**RATING SCALE:** 0 = NOT APPLICABLE + = ACCEPTABLE - = NOT ACCEPTABLE



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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
<b>GENERAL TRIAL COURTROOM (CONTINUED.....)</b>										
F. Press accommodations										
G. Defendant or prisoner seating										
H. Monitors										
I. Screens										
J. Power Point										

<b>JUVENILE / FAMILY</b>										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Jury box										
6. Attorney tables										
7. Bailiff's station										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
<b>JUVENILE / FAMILY COURTROOM (CONTINUED....)</b>										
8. Spectator seating										
9. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Evidence display & storage										
D. Clock										
E. Storage area										
F. Juvenile/Defendant seating										
G. Monitors										
H. Screens										
I. Power Point										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
TRAFFIC & ARRAIGNMENT										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Jury box										
6. Attorney tables										
7. Bailiff's station										
8. Spectator seating										
9. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Evidence display & storage										
D. Clock										
E. Storage area										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
TRAFFIC & ARRAIGNMENT (CONTINUED....)										
F. Press accommodations										
G. Defendant or prisoner seating										
H. Monitors										
I. Screens										
J. Power Point										

HIGH SECURITY										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Jury box										
6. Attorney tables										
7. Bailiff's station										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
HIGH SECURITY (CONTINUED....)										
8. Spectator seating										
9. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Evidence display & storage										
D. Clock										
E. Storage area										
F. Press accommodations										
G. Defendant or prisoner seating										
H. Monitors										
I. Screens										
J. Power Point										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
INFORMAL HEARING / MEETING / CONFERENCE ROOMS										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Attorney tables										
6. Bailiff's station										
7. Spectator seating										
8. Other courtroom components										
A. Special counsel station										
B. Clock										
C. Defendant or prisoner seating										
D. Monitors										
E. Screens										
F. Power Point										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
VIDEO ARRAIGNMENT										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Attorney tables										
6. Bailiff's station										
7. Spectator seating										
8. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Clock										
D. Press accommodations										
E. Defendant or prisoner seating										
F. Video equipment										

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VIDEO ARRAIGNMENT (CONTINUED....)										
G. Monitors										
H. Screens										
I. Power Point										

PRELIMINARY HEARING										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										
4. Witness stand										
5. Attorney tables										
6. Bailiff's station										
7. Spectator seating										
8. Other courtroom components										
A Sound lock/entrance vestibule										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
PRELIMINARY HEARING (CONTINUED....)										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Evidence display & storage										
D. Clock										
E. Storage area										
F. Press accommodations										
G. Defendant or prisoner seating										
H. Monitors										
I. Screens										
J. Power Point										

CALENDAR CALL										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Attorney tables										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
CALENDAR CALL (CONTINUED....)										
4. Bailiff's station										
5. Spectator seating										
6. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Clock										
D. Monitors										
E. Screens										
F. Power Point										

MULTIDEFENDANT (MEGA-COURTROOM)										
1. Judge's bench										
2. Court clerk's station										
3. Court reporter's station										

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MULTIDEFENDANT COURTROOM (CONTINUED....)										
4. Witness stand										
5. Jury box										
6. Attorney tables										
7. Bailiff's station										
8. Spectator seating										
9. Other courtroom components										
A. Sound lock/entrance vestibule										
B. Special counsel station										
C. Evidence display storage										
D. Clock										
E. Storage area										
F. Press accommodations										
G. Defendant or prisoner seating										

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COMPONENT	DESIGN & IMAGE	SPACE	ENVIRONMENT	HANDICAPPED ACCESS	ADJACENCY & CIRCULATION	ACCESSIBILITY	SECURITY	FURNISHINGS	TECHNICAL ASPECTS	COMMENTS
<b>MULTIDEFENDANT COURTROOM (CONTINUED....)</b>										
H. Video/electronic equipment										
I. Monitors										
J. Screens										
K. Power Point										

<b>COURT SUPPORT ELEMENTS</b>										
1. Judges' Chamber										
A. Judge's private office										
B. Judicial staff & chamber support										
(1) Reception / secretarial area										
(2) Law clerk area										
(3) Scheduling clerk area										
(4) Bailiff or court officer										

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COURT SUPPORT ELEMENTS (CONTINUED....)										
(5) Judicial toilets & robing areas										
(6) Judicial libraries and conference rooms										
(7) Judicial lounge										
2. Court reporter office										
3. Jury Operations										
A. Jury assembly / orientation										
B. Jury deliberation rooms										
C. Grand jury operations										
4. Security and prisoner detention										
A. Bailiff's central workroom										
B. Sheriff and process servers										
C. Central security control & security stations										

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<b>COURT SUPPORT ELEMENTS (CONTINUED....)</b>										
D. Central prisoner holding & transport										
E. Court-floor holding areas										
5. General court facility support elements										
A. Public waiting areas										
B. Victim / witness waiting room										
C. Attorney / client conference rooms										
D. Law Library										
E. Attorney lounge										
F. Press accommodations										
G. Law enforcement officers' waiting/workroom										
H. Centralized audio/video control room										

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ADMINISTRATION & CLERK OF COURT										
1. Court Administration										
2. Clerk of court's office										
A. General features										
B. Public queuing & waiting area										
C. Counter workstations										
D. Cashier workstations										
E. Public viewing / records review area										
F. Active records storage area										
G. Inactive records storage area										
H. Evidence storage area										
I. Microfilm room										
J. Clerks' workstations										
K. Supervisor offices										

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ADMINISTRATION & CLERK OF COURT (CONTINUED....)										
L. Computer facilities										
M. Supply/storage/equipment										
N. Noncourt activities										
O. Staff support areas										

COURT RELATED AGENCIES										
1. Prosecuting attorney's office										
2. Public defender's office										
3. Adult probation, parole, pretrial, and community services										
4. Juvenile court services										

BUILDING SUPPORT FUNCTIONS										
1. Lobby										
2. Elevators										

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BUILDING SUPPORT FUNCTIONS (CONTINUED....)										
3. Public restrooms										
4. Food services (cafeteria or vending area)										
5. Gift and news shop (retail areas)										
6. Day and child care										
7. First Aid										
8. Mail room										
9. Maintenance										
A. Administration										
B. Loading dock										
C. Mechanical										
D. Janitorial										
E. Storage & supply										

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MICHIGAN COURT FACILITY STANDARDS PROJECT

(Rev. 12/00)